



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE
SEOUL BUREAU



MSK-6019
3 December 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS

THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT : Monthly Report - Seoul Bureau - November 1986

I. GENERAL

1. Kim Il-song's "death," though much more imagined than real, highlighted Bureau operations during November. Throughout several days of uncertainty over Kim's health, the rumor mill in Seoul and Japan fed upon itself. Unverifiable third-hand reports were accepted at face value, hard facts could not be obtained, and when Kim appeared at the Pyongyang airport to greet Mongolian leader Batmonh the Western press, ROK Government, and to a lesser extent U.S. military reporting officers had reason to be modest about their handling of the earlier rumors. The Bureau was thrust into the forefront as the story developed. Beginning on the 16th, Bureau editors and the Bureau Chief spent the better part of three days in meetings and responding to telephone queries from senior Embassy and military reporting officers, explaining that Pyongyang radio had not reported Kim's demise, was not carrying funeral music, and was not operating in a way that was consistent with expected behavior following the death of a senior leader. Each time we convinced mission officers that Bureau observations of DPRK media did not indicate that Kim was no longer in charge the rumor resurfaced from another direction. The ROK Ministry of National Defense reported on the 17th that Kim had been shot to death (the Ministry hedged slightly by citing North Korean loudspeaker broadcasts along the DMZ as the source of its report, but the statement in the Ministry's name carried considerable weight as confirmation of previous rumors), and then on the morning of the 18th added to the confusion by reporting that O Chin-u had seized power (this report was also attributed to loudspeaker broadcasts). Extra editions of the ROK vernacular press were published on the 17th trumpeting the somewhat premature news of Kim's death. Shortly after the second Defense Ministry announcement Pyongyang radio reported Kim's presence at the airport. The Bureau dispatched associate editor [redacted] to Panmunjom, where he viewed Pyongyang's 18 November television transmission live. He telephoned an FYI to the Bureau on television coverage of the airport arrival ceremony, returned to the Bureau with videotapes, and helped prepare two editorial reports on television coverage. Bureau operating hours were expanded from 16-18 November to provide signon-signoff live coverage of Pyongyang radio. This event blossomed only a day after the

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arrival in Seoul of Ambassador James Lilley. The Ambassador came to the Bureau twice for briefings on events in the North, and called several times for updates. At a Country Team meeting on the 21st he expressed specific appreciation for FBIS reporting and observations, which he said he found "extremely valuable." Many Bureau items, and a number from Okinawa and Hong Kong Bureaus as well, were used in Embassy reporting on Kim's demise and resurrection.

2. The ROK citizenry has literally been urged to get itself into deep kimchi. A bumper cabbage crop has led to oversupply and unusually low prices. The Ministry of Home Affairs instituted a well-publicized campaign during November urging Koreans to make and consume even more kimchi in the months ahead, though it is already a three-meals-per-day staple in most Korean households. With a bit of official prodding, housewives associations throughout the country have initiated "eat more kimchi" campaigns in support of cabbage growers.

II. OPERATIONS

A. Editorial/Monitorial

From mid-month attention in the ROK media increasingly focused on a mass rally announced by the opposition NKDP for the 29th to support its campaign for a direct presidential election system. The war of words between the government and ruling DJP on one side and the NKDP on the other escalated as the rally date approached, and as the police repeatedly stated that they would not allow it to take place. The government often alluded to the violent aftermath of a May NKDP rally in Inchon in justifying its position that the rally was a public security threat, was illegal, and would not be allowed. The government mobilized upwards of 70,000 uniformed and plainclothes police on the rally day, blockaded or placed under house arrest the NKDP leadership, sealed off the central Seoul park where the rally was to be held with walls of policemen, and prevented people from gathering at the site. By mid-afternoon the NKDP formally called off the rally, vowing to hold another in the near future. The rally site is only a few blocks from the Embassy, and since no one knew how far the police were prepared to go, or how large or anti-American the crowds might be, the Embassy took security precautions. For a time it appeared that the Bureau might have to close early on the 29th because the Embassy was inside one of the rings of police in the area and it seemed possible that local employees might not be allowed through the police lines. We arranged for Okinawa Bureau to assume essential coverage if necessary, and reduced staffing as much as possible. One communicator did have momentary difficulty passing a police check, but other employees were able to report for work as usual and Bureau operations were largely unaffected. No demonstrators appeared at the Embassy gates, but the compound was ringed by hundreds of police throughout the day.

B. Technical

Reconfiguration of the Bureau's antenna field at Pyongtaek is nearing completion. Early in the summer the Bureau lost several antennas, which were removed to make room for a large circular antenna which will be used by another agency. This antenna should be operational sometime in December, and we expect that the Bureau will be able to use it. Cruising

checks will be done as soon as the Bureau is able to tie into the antenna. One of our former antennas at the site, a 2,000-foot Beverage, has been relocated and is now in use, though it has been shortened to about 1,500 feet. We hope that the Army maintenance unit at the site will reorient two Hermes loop antennas, which may improve our reception of PRC regional stations.

III. ADMINISTRATION

Personnel

1. Editor [] was on R&R in Australia from 10-28 November.

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2. The Bureau is continuing to recruit for an associate editor, to fill an opening created by [] resignation in October. Response to the Bureau's advertising campaign has thus far been underwhelming. A few good candidates have expressed interest, but none have followed up.

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IV. VISITS

1. Ambassador James Lilley, who arrived in Seoul on 14 November, visited the Bureau on the 16th and 17th for briefings on Pyongyang media behavior during the uncertainty over Kim Il-song's health. He returned on the 24th for a one-hour orientation on Bureau operations.

2. FBIS Director [] was in Seoul from 8-11 November, as part of an orientation tour of Far East bureaus.

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3. Joseph Mussomeli, a State Department country officer for the DPRK, was given a briefing on Bureau operations on the 12th.

4. Headquarters Korean analysts [] visited the Bureau on the 26th for briefing and orientation.

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Chief, Seoul Bureau

Attachment

Monthly Production Report

cc: Acting Chief, Okinawa Bureau
Chief, Hong Kong Bureau

Seoul Bureau Production Report for November 1986

I. TOTALS FROM ALL SOURCES:

| | |
|---|--------|
| TOTAL PUBLISHABLE WORDAGE FILED DURING MONTH: | 580900 |
| TOTAL NON-PUBLISHABLE WORDAGE FILED DURING MONTH: | 148140 |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF PUBLISHABLE ITEMS FILED DURING MONTH: | 1292 |

| | BROAD- CASTS | PRESS AGENCIES | PUBLI- CATIONS |
|--|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| II. INPUT OF REGULAR COVERAGE: (minutes or issues per week) | 13265.00 min. | 5510.00 min. | 100.23 issues |

III. OUTPUT FROM ALL SOURCES:
(publishable words per month)

| | | |
|--|------|-------|
| CHINA | | |
| Beijing International service in Korean to Korea | 720 | |
| Beijing City Service in Mandarin | 120 | |
| Changchun Jilin Provincial Service in Mandarin | 9390 | |
| Harbin Heilongjiang Provincial Service in Mandarin | 4780 | |
| Hohhot Nei Monggol Regional Service in Mandarin | 7980 | |
| Jinan Shandong Provincial Service in Mandarin | 3640 | |
| Shenyang Liaoning Provincial Service in Mandarin | 6040 | |
| Shijiazhuang Hebei Provincial Service in Mandarin | 1350 | |
| Tianjin City Service in Mandarin | 3680 | |
| Beijing BEIJING RIBAO in Chinese | | 2530 |
| Changchun JILIN RIBAO in Chinese | | 5650 |
| Harbin HEILONGJIANG RIBAO in Chinese | | 1860 |
| Jinan DAZHONG RIBAO in Chinese | | 2170 |
| Shenyang DONGBEI JINGJI BAO in Chinese | | 0 |
| Shenyang LIAONING RIBAO in Chinese | | 3850 |
| Shijiazhuang HEBEI RIBAO in Chinese | | 24450 |

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| | BROAD- CASTS | PRESS AGENCIES | PUBLI- CATIONS |
|--|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Tianjin TIANJIN RIBAO in Chinese | | | 18300 |
| CLANDESTINE (Clandestine) Voice of National Salvation in Korean to South Korea | 12120 | | |
| KOREA (NORTH) Pyongyang Domestic Service in Korean | 183900 | | |
| Pyongyang Television Service in Korean | 5500 | | |
| Pyongyang KCNA in English | | 129420 | |
| Pyongyang KULLOJA in Korean | | | 13280 |
| Pyongyang NODONG SINMUN in Korean | | | 0 |
| KOREA (SOUTH) Seoul Domestic Service in Korean | 1800 | | |
| Seoul Television Service in Korean | 0 | | |
| Seoul YONHAP in English | | 29080 | |
| Seoul CHOSON ILBO in Korean | | | 3050 |
| Seoul CHUNGANG ILBO in Korean | | | 200 |
| Seoul Editorial Report on ROK Media Korean | | | 2050 |
| Seoul HANGUK ILBO in Korean | | | 550 |
| Seoul KYONGHYANG SINMUN in Korean | | | 0 |
| Seoul SEOUL SINMUN in Korean | | | 1000 |
| Seoul THE KOREA HERALD in English | | | 49160 |
| Seoul THE KOREA TIMES in English | | | 42860 |
| Seoul TONG-A ILBO in Korean | | | 3520 |
| UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS Moscow International Service in Korean | 6900 | | |